

[The Free Flow of Information Act](#) was in the news over the weekend and today by way of multiple editorials:

The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) :

*Joining Democratic presidential rivals Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, GOP presidential heir apparent Sen. John McCain this week issued his own unexpected endorsement of Rep. Mike Pence's proposed federal shield law -- an endorsement that carries all the more weight not just because of the likelihood Sen. McCain will be the next president, but also because of his known "hard line" on national security.*

*Rep. Pence, R-Ind., has been pushing his current federal shield law for three years. It passed the House overwhelmingly in October, and a shield bill has also cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee. But the proposal has been kept off the Senate floor by vigorous opposition from Senate Republican Whip Jon Kyl, Sen. McCain's junior colleague from Arizona.*

The New York Times' [editorial yesterday](#) :

*THE push for a federal shield law to help journalists protect the identities of confidential sources got a big boost last week when John McCain, the Republican presidential candidate, endorsed it in Washington at a convention of the nation's newspaper editors and publishers.*

*The Democratic candidates, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, are also on board, and supporters of the proposal, which is strongly opposed by the Bush administration, are optimistic that success is near. The bill awaits Senate action after the House passed its version last October by a vote of 398 to 21...*

*There are two competing interests here: the right of an individual who believes he has been wronged to sue for damages, and a reporter's need to keep promises of confidentiality to sources who provide information for stories of vital public interest. If something close to the House version of the shield law were to become reality and be applied to this case, Locy would be off the hook, because the reporter's privilege in most civil cases like Hatfill's would be absolute. But the Senate might include a balancing test — to let a judge decide which interest was more compelling in each case — meaning Locy could still be in hot water. Walton said he thinks government employees should be fired for talking about a criminal investigation...*

The *New York Times*' [editorial today](#) :

*This rare unanimity among the three White House hopefuls is an encouraging sign that President Bush's successor — no matter who that turns out to be — will understand the need to protect vigorous reporting and the public's right to know about the government's conduct. After eight years of excessive secrecy and aggressive targeting of reporters by prosecutors that will be a very welcome change...*

*In addition to the three presidential candidates, dozens of news organizations, including The New York Times Company, support the Free Flow of Information Act...*

*Contrary to the administration's claims, enacting a federal shield law would not harm national security. What it would do is allow the robust reporting that is essential for both the country's safety and its freedom.*

And in the great state of Indiana, the [South Bend Tribune](#) :

*The American public's access to information that it needs in order to live in a free society is only as good as the press's freedom to report the news. A great many people -- Republicans and Democrats; liberals, moderates and conservatives -- understand that fact...*

*And nobody understands it better than Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., and Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind. Lugar and Pence are authors of the Free Flow of Information Act. It is time for the Senate to follow the lead of the House and bring the Free Flow of Information Act to a vote.*

*This week, Pence was a recipient of an American Society of Newspaper Editors' Sunshine Award in acknowledgment of his advocacy for a free press. He has described himself as "a conservative that believes in limited government." As Pence explained, "I believe the only check on government power in real time is a free and independent press."...*